

Proper Advertising of Smog Check Inspections

Electronic transmission must be included in cost of a Smog Check inspection

For many consumers, price is often a key determinant when selecting a station to perform a Smog Check inspection on their vehicle. Many stations recognize this fact and use advertising to promote their business.

When advertising this service, shops must include all the fees the customer must pay in order to complete an inspection. This includes all electronic transmission charges. Unlike the Smog Check certificate of compliance that is only issued upon a passing inspection, electronic transmission is not an optional component of the Smog Check inspection and therefore must be included in the overall advertised price for an advertisement to be in compliance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 3372.1. Simply put, this means that a Smog Check inspection cannot be done without the electronic communication to the Vehicle Information Database, and therefore is not an option on which consumers can make a price decision.

Any additional fees for services that may be extra depending on the type of vehicle being inspected must also be disclosed in the advertisement. The consumer should be able to determine if any additional costs may apply to their vehicle inspection.

An example of an appropriate advertisement could look like this:

Smog Check Inspection \$29.95* + \$8.25 certificate of compliance

*Price applies to 1996 and newer vehicles only; 1976-1995 model year vehicles \$1.00 more.

To learn more about these regulations, visit www.autorepair.ca.gov and click on the Laws & Regulations link.